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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 889
By McNally

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Senator Foster Eugene Elsea, a.k.a. "Otis," on his meritorious service as a member of the General Assembly.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this Body should recognize those fellow legislators who have performed their elected duties with remarkable dexterity and unprecedented devotion and whose efforts to excel have brought substantial benefits to their respective communities and to this great State; and

WHEREAS, Senator Gene Elsea of Spring City is one such distinguished public servant whose illustrious career in the Senate will come to an end at the adjournment sine die of the 2002 Session of the 102nd General Assembly, as he has announced his retirement from this august Body; and

WHEREAS, Senator Elsea has for many years been a highly influential figure in the political, social, and civic lives of the 13th Senatorial District, and he has served his constituents in numerous capacities, always working diligently at his elected duties and expending the necessary effort to understand the opposing sides of complex issues; and

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WHEREAS, in 1990, the good people of Senate District 13 evinced their great faith in the political and governmental capabilities of Gene Elsea by electing him as their representative to the Tennessee Senate, a position in which he has performed admirably; and

WHEREAS, during his three terms and twelve years in the Senate, he has been prominent as a dedicated and well-informed legislator who always votes his conscience; and

WHEREAS, Senator Gene Elsea is a dynamic and aggressive participant in the legislative process and has earned the respect and admiration of his colleagues for his outstanding contributions and service during the 97th through 102nd General Assemblies; he has astutely served as a member of the Senate Commerce, Labor, and Agriculture Committee; the Senate Finance, Ways, and Means Committee; the Select Oversight Committee on Children and Youth; the Select Oversight Committee on Corrections; the Select Oversight Committee on Education; the Joint Select Committee on Business Tax; the Senate Education Committee; the Senate Government Operations Committee; the Select Committee on Veterans Affairs; and the Fiscal Review Committee; and

WHEREAS, Senator Elsea adroitly represented his party as the Minority Caucus Chairman during the 99th through 101st General Assemblies; and

WHEREAS, since his election to the Senate, Gene Elsea has been ably served by his trusted and conscientious secretary, Evelyn Henderson; and

WHEREAS, throughout his distinguished tenure with the Senate Commerce, Labor, and Agriculture Committee, he has always begged to sponsor any fee increase proposals; and

WHEREAS, Senator Gene Elsea's close friend and colleague, Senator Jerry Cooper, has provided him with an array of bumper stickers for his collection, including "Cooper for Congress" stickers for his car and his desk in the committee room; and

WHEREAS, Senator Elsea first served the good people of Tennessee in state government as an esteemed member of the House of Representatives of the 93rd General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, a gentleman who truly appreciates the responsibilities, as well as the privileges, of leadership and citizenship, Gene Elsea has served as a member of many community, civic, and charitable organizations, including the Rhea Springs Masonic Lodge, the Alhambra Shrine Temple, the American Legion Post #203, the National Rifle Association, the Rhea County Chamber of Commerce, which he served as President, the local Lions Club, which he served as President, the Board of Directors of the First National Bank of Rhea County, the Highway 27 Improvement Committee, which he served as Chairman, the Dayton and Rhea County Economic Development Council, and the Job Service Employer Committee, which he served as Co-Chairman; and

WHEREAS, a native of Sale Creek, he received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Industrial Engineering from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga; and

WHEREAS, Senator Gene Elsea nobly served his country in the United States Air Force for four years; one and one-half years of his tenure was served in Europe; and

WHEREAS, a highly-regarded businessman, Senator Elsea owned and operated KTC Apparel, Inc. in Rhea County for many years; retiring in 1991, he closed his textile business in Spring City and Evensville; and

WHEREAS, for his unparalleled devotion to public service and his constituents, Gene Elsea has received numerous awards and honors, including the 1994 Tennessee School Boards Association Legislative Award, the 1996 Tennessee Association of Human Resource Agencies Legislator of the Year Award, the 1996 Tennessee Chapter of the National Federation of Independent Business Guardian of Small Business Award, the 1997 Tennessee Development District Association Legislator of the Year Award, the 2000 Tennessee Development District Association Legislator of the Year Award, and the 2000 Tennessee School Board Association Legislative Award; in 1999, he was recognized by the Tennessee State Employees Association for his support of the Tealeaf Chapter; and

WHEREAS, as a further testament to the honesty, integrity and the overall exemplary character and devotion with which he has performed his duties as a servant of the people, he

was recognized as the 2001 State Senator of the Year by the Upper Cumberland Development District for his tireless advocacy in support of the Upper Cumberland region; and

WHEREAS, his many accomplishments aside, Senator Gene Elsea is most appreciative of the love and companionship he shares with his wife and sweetheart of fifty years, Claudette Henley Elsea; with his retirement from the Senate, he will finally be giving Claudette the John Deere riding mower, that he has always promised her; and

WHEREAS, Gene and Claudette Elsea are the proud parents of three children; the Elsea's children and their spouses are: Kim and Joe Hawley, Terry Elsea, and Chris and Jimmy Barnes; they are the devoted grandparents of Jameson, Chelsea, Alexander, Chandler, and Chesney; and

WHEREAS, Senator Elsea is a faithful member of the First Baptist Church of Spring City; and

WHEREAS, Gene Elsea's retirement from the General Assembly will leave a void that will not easily be filled, and his considerable talents and energies will be sorely missed by the good people of Senate District 13; and

WHEREAS, this Body finds it appropriate to bid farewell to our respected friend and colleague, Senator Gene Elsea; now, therefore,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we hereby honor Senator Gene Elsea on his meritorious service to Tennessee as a member of the General Assembly, commend him for his countless contributions and many good works in service of the citizens of Bledsoe, Marion, Meigs, Rhea, Sequatchie, Van Buren, Grundy and White Counties, and extend to him our best wishes for much success and happiness in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation to Senator Elsea as a token of our esteem.